

In order to present a prima facie case of obviousness, three basic criteria must be met. First, there must be some suggestion or motivation, either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to modify the reference or to combine reference teachings. Second, there must be a reasonable expectation of success. Finally, the prior art reference must teach or suggest all the claim limitations. The teaching or suggestion to make the claimed combination and the reasonable expectation of success must both be found in the prior art, and not based on applicant's disclosure.

Claim 21 recites removing said backing from said veneer assembly, and a substantial amount of said layer of adhesive remains on said veneer assembly and wherein said entire backing is removable in substantially one piece.

A reference must be considered in its entirety. The reference cited by the Examiner teaches that the adhesive is cleanly removable. In fact, the reference cited by the Examiner teaches that leaving adhesive on the veneer is undesirable. (See, e.g., page 2, line 26 - page 3, line 5 of the reference cited.)

The rejection of claim 21 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over WO 98/55280 is unwarranted and should be withdrawn. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner provide a motivation to modify the reference to achieve the present invention, given that the reference teaches that such a modification is undesirable.

Claims 22-31 each add additional limitations to claim 21. Claim 21 is patentable for the reasons given above. Thus, claims 22-31 should likewise be patentable.

In view of the above, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the application is requested. Allowance of claims 21-31 at an early date is solicited.

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Respectfully submitted,

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